



Arlington Historic District Commissions
Final & Approved Minutes – December 14, 2023
Conducted by Remote Participation via ZOOM

Commissioners Present: D. Baldwin, C. Barry, B. Labau, S. Makowka, B. Melofchik, C. Tee, J. Worden

Commissioners Not Present: P. Chaves, B. Cohen, S. Savarese

Guests: M. Penzenik, C. Harris, K. Rogers, A. Plumley J. Mackey, O. Aries, T. Niles, A. Whitney,

1. **AHDC Meeting Opens 8:00pm**
2. **Approval of draft minutes from September 21 and October 26, 2023 – tabled until January meeting. J. Worden moved to table minutes, seconded by C. Barry. Unanimous consent to table minutes to January.**
3. **Appointment of Alternate Commissioners – Pleasant Street – S. Makowka, B. Melofchik; Jason Street – S. Makowka, B. Melofchik. D. Baldwin is listening in but under weather and not participating in the hearings tonight.**
4. **Communications:**
 1. **S. Makowka received communication from Town re: Jarvis House to install mini split units to provide ac and heating and they need to come before us for approval but are going for CBG funding and will come in with application asap.**
 2. **Application for new commissioner, Ken Lubar to become a new commissioner.**
 3. **Town is doing feasibility study on Mt Gilboa and wants to get our input. Commissioners agreed that they would like someone to attend one of our meetings to give a report. J. Worden reported B. Melofchik attended the last meeting. B. Melofchik reported she went to the meeting and that it was very well attended meeting by neighborhood and by Green Space and Outdoor Space and Mt Gilboa park enthusiasts. Neighborhood emotions and passion for this space is very high. Very strong opinions were expressed about the house and she understood that many would like to tear the house down. She did mention that is in a HD and that there may be some challenges to doing that and there were discussions. She encouraged consultants to attend our meetings. Susan Chapnick (Conservation Commission) is meeting right now and we should reach out to her. S. Makowka will reach out and request them to attend our next Zoom meeting.**

4. **Update on 13-15 Jason Street (with the black shutters) exterior renovation work – they are repairing rather than replacing the shutters where possible. Original inclination to replace everything with new shutters. It is a CONA for repair and replacement.**
5. **S. Makowka reached out to new Town Counsel about 38 Gray Street and will follow up.**

5. New Business

- a. **Formal Hearing for 149 Pleasant Street (FTO Realty Tr) for demolition to top of foundation of existing 1947 ranch and construction of new 2 ½ story house.** M. Penzenik gave a presentation as architect. J. Mackey the builder is there and possibly Stephen Doherty (not there yet). S. Makowka gave new construction review process – in order to make the process manageable the Commission has a 3-step process to review new construction in a District. 1) Any development on site development at all – something special or unique that would preclude the proposed development; 2) Sizing and massing and whether consistent with existing built environment and 3) Moving on to particular design details of the structure to be compatible with district. The Commission may decide to deny an application at any stage but will only consider a vote to approve after the completion of all three steps. Discussion will begin now on the proposed changes under step 1. S. Makowka noted that per Commission guidelines, no vote to deny would be would called for tonight.

Ms Penzenik (Applicant's representative) explained that the little existing house was not carved out of the adjacent property at 11 Gray Street, but in fact in 1898 the parcel was carved out as a separate building lot and much later the ranch house was built. The house is unremarkable house and is not a significant example of the style of house and the period it was built. They are proposing to demolish it and erect a new structure that is compatible with the neighborhood and close to the same footprint. The proposed structure would be a bit deeper and definitely taller. The parcel is R4 zoned, allowing 4 units. They are only proposing 3 units. There is a 17 foot drop from back to front of site which allows lowest level to have an at-grade entrance. The builder suggested we put an accessible unit on the lower floor acknowledging there are many folks desiring such housing. Looking around the neighborhood for inspiration she realized that there were a number of stucco houses with red tile roofs (renaissance Italianate revival style) and that's how this character of the house developed.

Neighborhood plan taken from GIS website showing buildings that show the micro-context of this property. Neighboring properties shown. This new house relates most significantly to its' neighbor at 145 Pleasant Street. The footprint is approx. 55' WIDE. Because the parcel is on a corner, the Zoning bylaws determines that it has 2 front yards. 2 ½ stories, 6000 gross sf, setback requirements shown in red. Garage under house with access from Pleasant Street currently, she is proposing parking that gives 2 cars per unit – no parking allowed on street, so she believes 2 per unit is necessary. Pg 9 – photos of existing house from different directions. Lower right-hand corner shows existing house and the neighboring one at 145 Pleasant Street. Neighboring houses shown. 118 Pleasant Street is a great example of Italianate Revival architecture. 11 Gray Street behind property is similar. Floor plans and elevations shown in the presentation. She wanted to give importance to the lower entry to have it be pleasing to the onlookers. Massing is simple, symmetrical but entrance is substantial with 1st floor bump out. Land is cut away so they can have parking and direct access to the lower unit with some retaining walls included. There is a well for the windows on the lower level.

Opened to question whether any development is appropriate on this site. S. Makowka asked for the info she found on the history of the land to add to the record. J. Worden said he thinks it would be an improvement to the site and the neighborhood for a building in scale and size. He wondered if Gray Street access for parking would be better but M. Penzenic said the topography is very tough up there on that side and just couldn't make it work. C. Barry said

the light at Irving Street will help because traffic does get breaks. He's excited but a bit troubled by the parking. The Applicant stated that the Redevelopment Board has jurisdiction on waterflow off the property and the issue with parking is going to be further dealt with by them. B. LaBau said the idea of making the new structure in the style chosen fits in well and makes sense but he too is concerned with the parking. Maybe a landscape solution that helps with the integration of it. S. Makowka said he'd like to stick to step 1 with possible identification of the information we would like to see if we move to step 2. Would like to get scale to neighboring structures. B. LaBau agreed he wants to see elevation on each side of the street. Grading in front yard is confusing and if contour lines are shown that would be useful. Something cutting thru elevation to the street. Front needs to be regraded and that will be necessary to see for how it presents to the street. B. Melofchik asked to see the parking again.

S. Makowka invited comments from the public. M. Aries (145 Pleasant St) said one element that is special and unique is the canopy and the trees and he would urge HDC to consider how the trees will be preserved to maintain the neighborhood canopy. M. Penzenik said a couple of the trees closer to Pleasant Street (1, maybe 2 will have to go but others will be trimmed back from overhang on the house) They are planning to do their best to preserve. C. Niles (152 Pleasant St) wanted to go on record to say that he has concerns with the parking. He disagrees with people being kind on Pleasant Street to neighborhood cars.

S. Makowka restated that he would like history of lot for the record and he feels that this is a very prominent corner of the District and improving the aesthetics of the area is wonderful. B. Melofchik asked about the tree canopy and what control we have – trees on town land are under Town's jurisdiction but the AHDC has no control on trees on the Applicants property. Curb cuts are not under our jurisdiction so will need to approach at least ARB and Building dept.. The Applicant stated that there are no ZBA permissions required but she will check after we've completed the work with the HDC.

C. Niles added that there will be a lot of grading and excavation he's imagining on the Gray St side there will need to be some retaining walls and around corner on Spring Valley there was some stark retaining walls put in as part of a development. Not part of our discussion now, but that will be discussed further down the road if the project continues forward. O. Aries said he believes the tree warden could answer questions about preservation of existing trees.

Continuing hearing to January – verbal acceptance of continuation by M. Penzenik. She will send email and additional information. Streetscape of proposed house and 1 house to either side, proposed on site plan with contours of site sections and front yard, take it out to sidewalk to see how it will present to the street to see spacing, etc. and the history of the lot. She will call Tree Worden about the trees. B. Melofchik asked for criteria on a demolition – in past no demo approved without knowing what will be built in place of the existing structure. An example was a ranch house on Pleasant St that was demolished to allow the relocation of a historic Greek Revival structure to the site from Broadway.

- b. **Formal Hearing for 30 Jason Street (Harris) for installation of solar panels on garage.** Christine Harris' husband and Adam Whitney, Solar Contractor gave the presentation. Adding solar panels to property. There are pre-existing panels on main building and to offset remainder of energy they need to add a few more panels that will be installed on the garage located to the rear of the property. Low profile panel – all black that will blend in with roof. Visual from the street – street view images shown as well. It is covered by the house in front of it and tree canopy and very far back from the street.

S. Makowka asked about the pieces of equipment alongside the house – what will be visible and what will it look like? Underground conduit – won't be visible at all. Utility meters and safety disconnects seen (already pre-existing). 1 Additional off switch to shut off both systems

if need be as well as fuse box on ac side. C. Barry asked to confirm that all panels will be uniform black and black edges. Correct. Panels face south. B. LaBau said only part of garage visible from the street is the front, but you may see the panels via an angle but the house blocks everything. Only real view is the front of the garage. J. Worden said garage is much lower than the house. The driveway heads downhill. Very minimal impact of the equipment along the side of the house. J. Worden recused himself because he is directly across the street. No public comment. C. Barry moved to accept application as submitted with panels to be black and with black edged. Seconded by C. Tee. C. Tee – y, Barry – y, Melofchik – y, Makowka – y, Worden – abstained, LaBau – y. Unanimous approval of voting members. Monitor appointed S. Makowka.

- c. **Formal hearing for 16 Maple Street.** K. Rogers gave a presentation. Early picture of house shown at 119 Pleasant Street before being moved to 16 Maple Street. D. Baldwin has been assisting the applicant on the project. The existing front stairs as shown are poured concrete. Their insurance company wants repairs done asap or removal of the front stairs. They would like to restore to stairs to what they have seen in historical photos indicating what the original stairs would have been (page 8). They want to demolish concrete and replace with wooden stairs, continue decking on front and wrap in lattice currently existing on rest of porch. The railings would be the same as the wood ones on top. 13 Academy Street has a set of wooden stairs similar to the one they are considering – simple with enclosure on each side, all in wood. They probably need railings to be up to code. They will also be replacing the lower concrete steps located closer to the street at a right angle to the main stair, but they aren't prepared to make a decision on the lower wrought iron railing and steps so that is not part of the application tonight. S. Makowka stated that maybe the bottom landing could be a slab of granite instead of being at grade and the monitor can assist with final decision on how they treat that area. B. LaBau asked if we have enough details. S. Makowka said he thinks he would feel comfortable with those parameters having more detailed specs presented and approved by monitor prior to installation. Materials etc. to be consistent with discussion tonight. J. Worden asked about the construction of the existing porch – it is a combination of wood framed as well as a pour of concrete over sand where the steps are right now. J. Worden moved approval of replacement of concrete steps and porch with wood. C. Barry seconded for discussion. J Worden amended motion to final details of proposed structure be approved by monitor prior to installation. C. Barry seconded. C. Tee – y, Barry – y, Melofchik – y, Makowka – y, Worden – y, LaBau – y. Unanimous approval of voting members. Monitor B. LaBau appointed.
- d. **Modification of Design Guidelines (Little Libraries, Below Grade Windows) – S.** Makowka proposed finding a time to meet where we can devote our attention to these other things that we never have time to discuss at length.
- e. **AHDC Public Input Meeting – no discussion**
- f. **Special Town Meeting Discussion – Lots of movement in town to housing redevelopment.** We need to participate early rather than be sure interests of historic preservation are considered on a timely basis rather than trying to change the course of the ship at the end of the process. B. Melofchik said there was no historic representative on MBTA Overlay group and that she expressed her opinion on Mt Gilboa. Also concerned about 2024 Affordability Overlay.
- g. **Letter of Support for CPA funds for Salvation Army's Wellington Street property,** Elaine Shea House. This would be a CONA request. Concern of this being ongoing maintenance of a private property and not really preservation work which is what CPA funds are used. S. Makowka will draft a specific letter of acknowledging the significance of the structure.
- h. S. Makowka asked that appointment of officers for 2024 be added to the January agenda.

- i. **Application from Ken Lubar to serve as Commissioner for Jason/Gray HD.** C. Barry agrees with S. Makowka that we should reach out to him to attend our January meeting to introduce himself. Carol will reach out and ask if he could put together a brief resume and cover letter for us to be able to send to BOS.
- 6. **Executive Session (If Necessary) To Discuss Litigation Issue** – no Executive Session. Remove item from future agendas since the suit has been dismissed.
- 7. **Meeting Adjourned 10:08 pm.** J. Worden moved to adjourn. Seconded by C. Barry. Unanimous roll call to adjourn at 10:08 pm.